



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585
May 19, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS
DIRECTORS, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NATIONAL LABORATORIES

FROM: BILL RICHARDSON *Bill Richardson*
SUBJECT: Asian Pacific American Concerns

I recently had meetings with several of the national leaders of the Asian Pacific American community. These leaders expressed their concern that Asian Pacific Americans as a group were finding their loyalty and patriotism questioned in the wake of the espionage allegations. I also met with Asian Pacific American scientists working in our Laboratories who relayed their concerns about discrimination or racial profiling.

Early last month, I issued a very clear statement that any actions of one individual are not a reflection on any other American citizen. I would like to state in the strongest possible terms that I will not tolerate racial profiling at the Department of Energy or at any of its Laboratories. Please ensure that this message is delivered in the clearest possible terms to each and every employee in your organization.

As a Hispanic American, I have felt the painful sting of offhand bigotry and thoughtless generalizations. I am attaching a copy of remarks that I delivered before the *Committee of 100* in New York City on April 30, 1999. Please take the time to read these remarks and share the message they convey with your employees.

Attachment



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**PREPARED REMARKS FOR
U.S. SECRETARY OF ENERGY BILL RICHARDSON
COMMITTEE OF 100
NEW YORK, NY
APRIL 30, 1999**

Thank you, Henry (Tang, Chairman, Committee of 100). And thank you all for asking me to join you here in New York today.

When I was Ambassador to the United Nations, I had the distinct pleasure of living at this esteemed address. What a wonderful place, full of history, tradition, and myth.

When I was looking at your invitation for me to come speak before you today, I was struck by the Committee's motto: "Seeking common ground while respecting differences." We would do well to aspire to these beliefs in all aspects of our lives. To join hands to achieve great things, drawing on one another's specialties, so that the sum is far greater than the whole, breaking us free from the limiting shackles of race, religion, creed, and blood.

Now, I know that there is an uneasy feeling in this room regarding recent allegations of espionage at the Energy Department's National Laboratories. I'd go so far as to call it anger. I understand that Asian Pacific Americans are concerned that their loyalty and patriotism are being challenged.

And that's because of racism. In the rush to judgment, some individuals react in ignorance or malice. It happened back during World War II, when Japanese-Americans were uprooted from their homes and forced into internment camps. And it happens with appalling frequency to African Americans, every day.

Let me be perfectly clear with you. The alleged actions of any one individual are not – and never will be – a reflection on any other American citizen, whatever his or her race, color, creed, ethnic background, or nation of origin. This is a central belief of the Department of Energy, the Clinton Administration, the laws of this land, and the fundamental fairness of the American people.

In the wake of the recent espionage allegations, we have received numerous inquiries regarding the ethnic heritage of the employees at our labs. Questions like: How many Chinese Americans are there at your labs? How many Indian Americans; how many Russian Americans? And the answer we give? We don't distinguish between Americans. Americans are Americans – period.

Now, what I'd like to do today is share with you some of the facts of the recent charge of Chinese espionage. This debate revolves around the protection of America's sensitive nuclear weapons information.

At the core of the debate is a very serious national security issue – an issue in which my

Department is deeply involved. The Department of Energy, through its laboratories, has been responsible for maintaining the nation's nuclear deterrent since the dawn of the atomic age. This deterrent remains a cornerstone of our national security policy.

Last week, the Director of Central Intelligence released his assessment on the damage to U.S. national security due to Chinese espionage.

That assessment states that,

- "China obtained by espionage classified U.S. nuclear weapons information that probably accelerated its program to develop future nuclear weapons.
- China also obtained at least basic design information on several modern U.S. nuclear re-entry vehicles, including the Trident II, or "W88." And that
- China also obtained information on a variety of U.S. weapon design concepts and weaponization features, including those of the neutron bomb."

I don't need to tell you that these findings have grave implications. And it underscores the importance of the very aggressive steps we have already taken to protect the secrets at our national labs. We have instituted:

- more extensive security reviews – including authorizing the use of polygraphs – for DOE scientists working in sensitive programs.
- background checks for all visitors from sensitive countries.
- stricter document controls at the laboratories for all Secret and Top Secret documents that contain weapon design data.
- counterintelligence professionals based at weapons labs.
- an increase in the counterintelligence budget by a factor of 15 since 1996 (\$2.6 million in 1996 to \$39.2 million in 2000)."

And we've bolstered physical, cyber, and personal security.

On April 2nd, I ordered a stand-down of the classified computers at all three weapons' laboratories. I only let them come back up when I was satisfied that progress was being made toward establishing better security.

With these very strong measures and many others, we have taken the kind of actions that will protect our national security secrets.

Now, I know that some of you are concerned that a recently-terminated employee at Los Alamos may have been singled out for particular treatment. Let me tell you frankly that this perception is wrong. Let me explain what happened.

In March, I recommended the dismissal of a University of California contract employee at the Department of Energy's Los Alamos National Laboratory. This action came after we learned that this individual had failed to properly inform us about:

- contact with persons from a sensitive country;
- specific instances of failing to properly safeguard classified material; and
- apparently, attempting to deceive the laboratory about security related issues.

The personnel action was taken because these are serious violations of our security requirements. Period. The secrets held within the walls of our national laboratories require stringent security and all employees must abide by these rules.

Now, people have asked me about the timing of this dismissal and how he could be fired if he has not been charged with anything. Let me be clear. These actions were taken separate and apart from the law enforcement investigation and were based on violations of the Energy Department's security requirements. The recent revelations about transfers of nuclear weapons computer codes, from a classified to an unclassified system, magnifies the extent of the security problem.

A legal case — and any indictments or charges — is a separate and different matter. It is not something that the Energy Department can or should control. The FBI and the Department of Justice pursue law enforcement matters and while it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment on the specifics of their case, I can say that espionage cases take a long time.

I know that there are concerns that the dismissal of the Los Alamos employee will in some way impact the careers of all Asian Americans. Let me tell you directly: I will fight to ensure that this does not happen.

In the past two months, I have met with several leaders of the Asian Pacific American community. In these meetings, I have tried to convey President Clinton's and my personal, unwavering stance on this issue. I have gathered the senior managers at the Department -- my Assistant Secretaries and senior staff -- to tell them explicitly that the actions of one are not a reflection of the community at large. I'm telling my Lab directors that I'll brook no quarter on this: Get the message out.

As a Hispanic, I'm acquainted with senseless generalizations and stereotypes. I've been hurt by offhand bigotry. And it gets me angry because it is attitudes like these that keep America from living up to its full potential.

Americans of Asian descent are part of the rich and diverse heritage that makes this nation great. Americans of Asian descent have made outstanding contributions to America's scientific excellence and national security. Nobel Prize-winners, like:

- T.D. Lee, for contributions in physics;
- Steve Chu for findings in laser cooling, and
- Susumu Tonegawa, for breakthroughs in immunology.

Chinese scientists have made important contributions to U.S. programs in superconductivity and simulation of fluid flow -- the latter of which clarifies work on oil reservoirs and the dynamics of

El Nino.

These scientists -- and countless others -- have literally reshaped the landscape of science. No one can question this. And through your scholarship endowment, I know that you in the Committee of 100 are well aware of the value found in this cooperation.

And now, those who have questioned the patriotism of Asian Pacific Americans are also sowing seeds of a darker xenophobia. Some in Congress are now calling for America to close its labs off from all foreign cooperation. In both the House and Senate, bills have been introduced to prohibit foreigners from visiting even unclassified parts of our laboratories.

Now, the individual in question was an American citizen and an employee of the Lab -- not an outside visitor. Therefore, this call to isolate American scientists is startlingly misconstrued and short-sighted. And it is wrong.

We engage in research with foreign scientists because it is in our nation's interest. It is in our national security interest and in our interest for a continued future of scientific excellence.

Through our international work and our foreign visitor programs, we are strengthening America's national security. In nonproliferation, we are helping to protect nuclear weapons material in the former Soviet Union from theft by rogue states or terrorists. We're helping to find peaceful employment for Russia's nuclear weapons scientists -- many of whom are not being paid -- so that they are not forced to accept work in places like Iran and North Korea. And we are furthering arms control by supporting international monitoring of treaties and helping to prevent nuclear smuggling.

Science is the key that unlocks many of our national challenges. To advance, we must include minds that are the world's first and finest. For science to rapidly advance at the frontiers, it must be open. I believe in a policy of openness, and have worked to defend it.

These scientific interactions also serve our national security. To do science in the United States today, we cooperate with scientists from nations all over the world, many of whom are working at American universities. An American Physical Society survey shows that over 50% of graduate students in the U.S. are foreign nationals -- from China, Russia, India, and many others.

If we followed critics' xenophobic view -- looking ever inward -- we would perilously undermine the ability of our national laboratories to meet their national security and science missions. We can do open science with international collaboration and safely protect our national secrets.

The right way to accomplish this is through strong security and counterintelligence efforts -- and we are doing that. The wrong way would be to draw an iron curtain around the labs. That won't guarantee security but it would ensure the erosion of the vital scientific foundation that keeps our nation strong. Our national security is second to none because we have science that is second to none.

Ladies and gentlemen: I have seen your letter to President Clinton, and I hear your concern. I want to make sure you know that the President and this Administration do not abide by the misbegotten dogmas of suspicion and distrust. We never have. We never will.